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ABSTRACT

This document addresses frequently asked questions and issues and promotes greater understanding by administrators, teachers, and parents of the potential benefits of education standards for the rapidly increasing population of students whose first language is not English. The standards movement challenges educators and the public to understand that high standards are as important in education as they are in other professions. Standards define what is essential for successful performance and encourage people to strive for the best. Setting high standards for all students means that the quality of education offered the best and the brightest should be the quality of education available to all. However, varied and innovative instructional strategies will be essential to enable students with diverse needs and varying levels of English proficiency to learn at high levels. To effect these strategies, the United States will need highly skilled teachers who can offer a range of learning opportunities that connect to different learning styles, some of which may be culturally based, and also provide the necessary accommodations and supports that enhance student learning. Initial test scores are an important foundation for identifying where current curriculum and practices do not promote high standards of learning for all students, and where curriculum improvement and staff development are necessary if equity in learning is to be achieved. Three appendixes contain tools to assist educators in implementing policy, practice, and professional development: a discussion of professional development to support standards, a discussion of assessment that supports standards based learning, and guidelines for determining the appropriateness of performance assessments for students from diverse backgrounds. (Contains 3 figures and 43 references.) (SLD)

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Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory
A Program of The Education Alliance at Brown University

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Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory At Brown University (LAB)

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Preface

Across the nation education reform initiatives have created new standards for learning that define what students should know and be able to do to live and work in the 21st century. These reform efforts consistently emphasize that *education standards are meant for all students*. We are seeing an unprecedented commitment to educate *all* of the nation's children to be effective thinkers, problem-solvers, and communicators so they can participate as members of the global community. However, while high standards for all students is the most important premise of the standards movement, it also represents its greatest challenge, particularly in schools with student populations that reflect diverse cultural and language backgrounds. Never before have schools been asked to ensure that *all* students achieve publicly-defined standards of learning. Never before have we asked schools to consider "higher-order" skills as *core* skills to be acquired by all students, not just the most gifted. Never before have teachers faced such diversity in student populations.

Today as standards-based reform moves from development to implementation, questions about standards and their use with diverse populations are being raised by both the school administrators and teachers responsible for implementing them at the school and classroom level and the parents and community members who struggle to understand the changes occurring in schools. Some of these questions focus on equity issues and why the same high standards are intended for all students, while others focus on how standards can be used to improve the quality of education offered to culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. *Standards, Equity, and Cultural Diversity* addresses frequently raised questions and issues and promotes greater understanding by administrators, teachers, and parents of the potential benefits of education standards for the rapidly increasing population of students whose first language is not English.

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Education Standards: The Starting Point for School Reform

Education standards are the starting point for defining what all students should know and be able to do to live and work in the 21st century. Their development has been driven by the need to define what all students should learn in school to participate successfully in a global, technology-driven economy. Touching upon every aspect of the education system, the movement to establish education standards is challenging long-held assumptions about how education should be conducted in the nation's schools, particularly for students who have had the least access to high quality learning environments. Indeed, much of the work of developing education standards has been accomplished by individuals who are deeply committed to a vision of society where people of different backgrounds, cultures, and perceived abilities have equal access to a high quality education.

Defining What Students Should Learn

The lack of clear standards for what all students should learn and how well they should learn has been a major drawback in efforts to improve student achievement in the American education system. Former Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch, a national leader in establishing the current standards movement, pointed out that while the term "education" means to lead forth, it is impossible to lead anyone anywhere without knowing where you want to go. In her book, *National Standards in American Education: A Citizens Guide* (1995), she provided a common-sense rationale for the development of education standards.

> Americans . . . expect strict standards to govern construction of buildings, bridges, highways, and tunnels; shoddy work would put lives at risk. They expect stringent standards to protect their drinking water, the food they eat, and the air they breathe. . . . Standards are created because they improve the quality of life. (Ravitch, 1995)

Without clarity or consensus about what all students should know and be able to do, expectations for learning have been defined by the textbooks and tests used in the overwhelming majority of schools, and many students have left school without ever being challenged to their full potential. In contrast, the standards-based model of education reform emphasizes the participation of educators and stakeholders in defining what students should know and be able to do. It takes the "mystery" out of what schools and teachers should expect of students and what it takes to succeed in school. Students are measured against publicly defined standards of achievement rather than being compared to

national norms established by test companies. Many see this element of standards-based education as one of the most hopeful aspects of education reform for culturally diverse student populations.

> If the setting of standards for all children becomes a completely open process in all of its phases from conception to development to interpretation, perhaps the hidden biases that have led to low level learning for poor and culturally diverse student populations may become more visible, and at best everyone will have a clearer sense of what counts in our schools. (Garcia & Pearson, 1994)

Preparing Students for the 21st Century

The development of education standards has been driven by widespread recognition that today's world requires many skills that are not being taught in schools. The issue isn't whether schools are better or worse than they used to be, but rather whether public schools are preparing all children for the next century. Today's workplace already requires individuals to understand multidimensional problems, design solutions, plan their own tasks, evaluate results, and work cooperatively with others. These requirements demand a new set of competencies and foundation skills for American students and an approach to education that is very different from that of the education system that served the industrial age (Lachat, 1994). Many studies and reports have concluded that unless educational performance in the United States improves dramatically, American workers will not be able to use the new technologies that will create most of the world's jobs and economic growth in the next century.

> For the most part, the American education system has succeeded in preparing generations of students from diverse backgrounds for a place in American society. Where it did not, the economy had a place for people who were willing to work hard even without the skills of formal schooling. In this process, expectations varied from school to school and student to student, but the job got done. Now the job has changed. The demands of today's society are different. We need graduates who can compete in the global economy. We need adults who can use the knowledge and skills they acquire in school to deal with the complex issues of their own communities and of the world. (National Education Goals Panel, 1993)

Defining clear standards for student learning is thus an important first step in the process of educating children to be effective thinkers, problem-solvers, and communicators so they can reap the rewards of full participation in a technology-driven information age.

Using Content and Performance Standards to Guide Student Learning

Two types of standards are being developed as the foundation of standards-based reform: content standards and performance standards.

Content standards **define what children should know and be able to do.**

Content standards describe the knowledge, skills, and understandings students should have in order to attain proficiency in a subject area. Content standards can serve as starting points for curriculum improvement because they describe what teachers are supposed to teach and what *all* students are expected to learn in each subject area. They free schools from depending on what textbook publishers determine should be taught in schools.

Benchmarks are subcomponents of content standards—they identify the expected understandings and skills for a content standard at different grade levels. Illustrated below are benchmarks for a mathematics content standard.

> STANDARD:
>
> ***Understands and applies basic and advanced properties of the concepts of measurement.***
>
> 8th grade benchmarks
>
> - Understands the basic concept of rate as a measure
> - Solves problems involving perimeter (circumference) and various shapes (e.g., parallelograms, triangles, circles)
>
> 12th grade benchmarks
>
> - Understands the concepts of absolute and relative errors in measurement
> - Solves real-world problems involving three-dimensional measures (e.g., volume, surface area)

(Kendall and Marzano, 1997)

Kendall and Marzano's work (1997) at the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McCrel) provides extensive examples of content standards and benchmarks. McCrel has analyzed all documents from the national standards-setting efforts across the various content areas, and produced a resource database that translates the available information into a common format for use by schools.

Performance standards **set specific expectations for various levels of proficiency.**

Performance standards spell out what students must demonstrate to be considered proficient in the subject matter defined in the content standards. They describe various levels of

performance (a rubric). For example, a commonly used rubric in standards-based assessment systems defines student performance according to four levels: Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Novice. Shown below are examples of generic performance scales for benchmarks that focus on what Marzano and Kendall (1996) distinguish as "declarative knowledge" involving information, concepts, and relationships and "procedural knowledge" involving the use of specific skills, strategies, and processes.

General Scale for Performance on a Declarative Benchmark

4	**Advanced Performance:** Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the important information; is able to exemplify that information in detail and articulate complex relationships and distinctions
3	**Proficient Performance:** Demonstrates an understanding of the important information; is able to exemplify that information in some detail
2	**Basic Performance:** Demonstrates an incomplete understanding of the important information, but does not have severe misconceptions
1	**Novice Performance:** Demonstrates an incomplete understanding of the important information along with severe misconceptions

General Scale for Performance on a Procedural Benchmark

4	**Advanced Performance:** Carries out the major processes/skills inherent in the procedure with relative ease and automaticity
3	**Proficient Performance:** Carries out the major processes/skills inherent in the procedure without significant error, but not necessarily at an automatic level
2	**Basic Performance:** Makes a number of errors when carrying out the processes and skills important to the procedure, but still accomplishes the basic purpose of the procedure
1	**Novice Performance:** Makes so many errors when carrying out the process and skills important to the procedure that it fails to accomplish its purpose

(Marzano & Kendall, 1996)

Content and performance standards create a concrete vision of academic success for all students, and are the foundation for other pieces of education reform — performance assessments, challenging curricula, educational resources, and professional development. Thus, there are several ways that content and performance standards can be used to improve the education system. They can be used by state education agencies and test developers to design statewide assessment systems based on clearly defined standards of learning for all students, by teachers to organize curriculum and instruction, by textbook publishers to develop educational resources for schools, and in teacher pre-service and inservice programs to prepare teachers in what they are expected to teach.

Setting High Standards for All Students

Education standards emphasize better results for all students, shifting the emphasis from "access for all" to "high quality learning for all." This new emphasis is based on the belief that expectations for the majority of American students have been far too low. "Students who have been traditionally allowed to fail must be helped to succeed, and many more must become not just minimally schooled, but highly proficient and inventive" (Darling-Hammond et al., 1993). More than ever before, policymakers are recognizing that educational failure and undeveloped human talent are permanent drains on society. Founded on the belief that it is in the national interest to educate all children and youth to their full potential, the standards movement aims to improve teaching and learning, and break the cycle of failure experienced by so many students. "When children are not held to high academic standards, the results can be low achievement and the tragedy of students leaving school without ever having been challenged to fulfill their potential" (Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills [SCANS], 1991).

The call to improve America's schools isn't new, but the emphasis on high standards for *all* students is. Standards-based reform seeks to establish clear attainable standards at internationally competitive levels for the entire student population. This represents a new way of thinking, a paradigm shift—it means high expectations for every student in every school, not just some students in some schools. Historically, our education system has been organized to develop basic skills for all students and higher order proficiencies for those who are college bound. Education standards directly disclaim this two-tier system of education, reflecting the belief that all children can learn at high levels, given the time, tools and motivation to do so. Standards emphasize our commitment to unlocking this potential in all children, not just those who are college bound (Romer, 1992).

For poor and culturally diverse student populations, standards may help to clarify that the purpose of schooling is not to sort people into artificial and often limiting groups, but to make the knowledge and skills essential to success in today's society accessible to all. Given today's increasingly diverse student populations, the question can no longer be whether it is feasible to provide a high quality education for students who vary widely in their characteristics, learning styles, levels of English proficiency, and educational needs. "The question at hand is how we can best respond to student diversity so that standards are upheld for every student, including the most difficult to teach and most challenging to motivate" (Wang, 1994).

The Connection between Standards and Educational Equity

Equity cannot be separated from excellence in current efforts to improve the quality of learning in schools. Beneath the surface of standards-based reform is the question of whether the American dream truly belongs to all students and whether American society is morally committed to equal educational opportunity. "Equity demands equivalence in the standards of learning for all students *and* in the instructional quality offered to each student, together with the opportunity to demonstrate learning in a variety of ways" (National Forum on Assessment, 1995). In her study of the development of standards in America over the past decade, Ravitch (1995) highlighted the connection between excellence and equity in the standards movement.

> The promise of standards prompted an unusual political convergence. People who worried most about excellence looked to standards to raise achievement; people who worried most about equality looked to standards to provide students with equal access to challenging curricula and learning experiences. Together they forged an unusual and effective alliance. (Ravitch, 1995)

Inequities in Conditions for Learning

From an equity perspective, education standards will not improve student achievement unless they are accompanied by policies and practices that directly address inequities in the resources available to schools. A vast number of American students simply do not have equal access to the quality of education necessary to achieve high standards of learning. Winfield (1995) and Darling-Hammond (1994; 1995) have cautioned that the problem with assuming education standards will improve teaching practices for poor and minority groups is that this assumption ignores the grossly inadequate conditions in the schools they attend. Many of these students are in schools that receive low levels of funding and have minimal opportunities to develop the proficiencies reflected in emerging standards and new assessments. In addition, schools that serve these students in high-poverty inner-city settings often have difficulty recruiting highly qualified teachers.

Considerable research supports the need to address the equity and resource implications of "high standards for all students." In *The 1996 Education Trust State and National Data Book*, it was highlighted that "the fact that progress in minority achievement has stopped at a time when minorities comprise a growing portion of the student population should sound a wake-up call to the whole country . . . for while virtually all minority

students master basic skills by age 17, disproportionately few master the higher-level skills they need to assume productive roles in society" (Education Trust, 1996).

> The problem now is one of will. Experiences from real schools show that poor and minority students can excel if they are taught at high levels. But most schools don't teach all students at the same high level. . . . In fact we have constructed an educational system so full of inequities that it actually exacerbates the challenges of race and poverty, rather than ameliorates them. Simply put, we take students who have less to begin with and give them less in school too. (Education Trust, 1996)

Gordon (1992) also emphasized that education reform should not occur in a vacuum, but must consider the complex societal conditions that control access to essential resources:

> [T]here are those of us who are sympathetic to standards and assessment, but insist that it is immoral to begin by measuring outcomes before we have seriously engaged the equitable and sufficient distribution of inputs, that is, opportunities and resources essential to the development of intellect and competence. (Gordon, 1992)

Supporters of education standards hope that standards will provide the leverage needed to address equity issues—to point all schools and teachers toward the same high goals, to reduce inequities in school resources, and to gain access to instructional environments that support learning and achievement for all students. Organizing school curricula around clearly defined standards may put an end to the inferior education that now deprives many children of the chance to study a challenging curriculum, and to have access to good jobs or further education when they finish school (National Council on Education Standards and Testing, 1992). In short, the success of standards-based reform depends upon a comprehensive set of changes involving access to resources, access to highly skilled teachers, access to high quality instruction, and a safe and supportive school environment (Neill, 1995; Stevens, 1996).

Opportunity-to-Learn Standards

Opportunity-to-learn standards were proposed by several groups at the national level to clarify the conditions in schools necessary for all students to have the opportunity to achieve the knowledge, skills, and understandings set out in the content standards. Opportunity-to-learn standards address the following areas:

- The quality and availability of curricula, instructional programs, and instructional materials
- The extent to which curriculum, instruction, and assessment align with standards that reflect high expectations for students

- Teacher capacity to provide high-quality instruction
- Financial and programmatic resources that support high levels of learning, including technology, laboratories, and school libraries
- Teacher and administrator access to sustained, long-term professional development
- A safe and secure learning environment
- Parent and community involvement with the schools
- Non-discriminatory school policies

At the heart of "opportunity-to-learn" is equal access to powerful and sustained instruction—access to those ideas and instructional strategies that lead to the development of higher order reasoning and problem-solving skills (Stevens, 1996; Wolf & Reardon, 1993). Therefore, opportunity-to-learn standards underscore the quality of the learning environment and the range of resources necessary to support high student achievement for diverse learners.

Opportunity-to-learn standards challenge us to confront the inequities that exist in American education. Many schools, overwhelmed by the needs of their increasingly diverse student populations, do not have sufficient resources to respond to student needs (Baker, 1992). Thus, opportunity-to-learn standards pose a challenge when school funding is already constrained by tight state and local budgets.

What Standards-Based Learning Means for Schools

Standards-based learning presents significant challenges to schools. Schools must ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve at high levels and embrace the belief that the dramatic differences we see in student performance are the result of conditions unrelated to students' capacity to learn (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Taylor, 1994). This shift represents a very different mission for schools and a new emphasis on accountability for the success of all students.

> In the past, how students were taught was mostly fixed, and the results varied—some students failed, most learned at least some of what they were taught. To enable all students to learn at high levels, varied instructional strategies are needed to challenge them. The standards are fixed but the means of reaching them are varied. . . . High standards for all is a way to say that we will refuse to settle for low levels of learning for any student. (National Education Goals Panel, 1993)

Standards-based learning means that the curriculum for *all* students is based on the same expectations for what students should know and be able to do. Assessment is integrated with instruction, subject matter is organized around real world tasks, and the pace of instruction is based on student progress rather than how much content has to be "covered." There is an emphasis on results and accountability, less use of textbook "end-of-unit" tests and norm-referenced measures, and increased use of alternative assessments that offer varied ways for students to demonstrate their understandings and skills (Lachat, 1994). These changes represent a dramatically different approach to schooling as Figure 1 illustrates.

Changing to a standards-based model requires that schools break free of assumptions that attribute the difficulties experienced by students from non-mainstream cultural, language, or economic backgrounds to a lack of ability. Instead, schools will have to direct resources toward ensuring that school and classroom conditions allow all children to develop the higher order knowledge and proficiencies necessary in today's world. In addition, more than ever before, schools will have to engage political and community leaders in addressing the impact of social and economic conditions on children's ability to learn (Farr & Trumbull, 1997; Neill, 1995; Stevens, 1996; Taylor, 1994).

Figure 1

Traditional and Standards-Based Approaches to Schooling

Traditional	Standards-Based
The process of education is emphasized over results. Schooling is organized around time; curriculum is "covered"; instruction is paced by the schedule; and assessment occurs at "unit" intervals.	The emphasis is on results—students demonstrate their achievement of high learning standards. The pace of instruction is based on learning, not how much content has to be "covered."
The curriculum is derived from existing content, which is most often determined by textbooks. The curriculum is organized around a sequence of concepts, facts, and units.	The curriculum is derived from standards that define what students should know and be able to do. Subject matter is "integrated" around "real-world" tasks that require reasoning, problem-solving, and communication.
Learning is organized around a prescribed curriculum delivered in standardized time periods. Credentials are awarded based on "time served," issued in "Carnegie Units."	Learning is organized around what students should know and be able to do. Credentialing is based on student demonstration of proficiency in knowledge and skill areas.
Assessment is done at the end of instructional units and often focuses on lower-level skills that can be assessed through paper-pencil responses. Grades are based on a cumulative averaging of performance over a fixed period of time. There is a reliance on the use of norm-referenced standardized tests.	Assessment is integrated with instruction and focuses on what students understand and can do. Performance-based assessments are used to assess student progress in developing proficiencies based on content standards over time.
School accountability is defined in terms of programs offered, attendance and dropout rates, the number of students who graduated, and the results of standardized norm-referenced tests.	The school is accountable for ensuring and demonstrating that all students are developing proficiencies that represent high standards for what students should know and be able to do.

(Lachat, 1994)

What Standards-Based Learning Means for Students and Teachers

The overall emphasis on higher order reasoning and problem solving skills in the standards movement means that the learning process focuses attention on how students think and what they understand, not just whether they get the right answers (Resnick & Klopfer, 1989; Resnick & Resnick, 1992). Instead of basing instruction on the amount of time needed to cover topics, more flexibility is allowed so that students can develop essential knowledge and skills over extended periods of time. Students demonstrate what they know and can do through performing on-demand tasks, preparing long-term projects, or assembling portfolios that contain a collection of their work produced over time.

In standards-based learning, students

- Develop reasoning and problem-solving skills through real-world learning tasks
- Play an active role in "constructing" their own understanding of concepts
- Explore issues and concepts in depth over time
- Take increased responsibility for their learning
- Use a wide range of resources including manipulatives and computer technology
- Participate in collaborative learning activities
- Demonstrate their understanding and skills

In standards-based instruction, teachers

- Organize learning around what students need to know and be able to do
- Enrich their teaching by cultivating students' higher order thinking processes
- Guide student inquiry by posing real-life tasks that require reasoning and problem-solving
- Emphasize holistic concepts rather than fragmented units of information
- Provide a variety of opportunities for students to explore and confront concepts and situations over time
- Use multiple sources of information rather than a single text
- Work in interdisciplinary teams
- Use multiple forms of assessment to gather concrete evidence of student proficiencies

Standards-based learning requires new roles and skills for classroom teachers. Implementing new standards-based curriculum frameworks will take considerable professional time and energy and a willingness to try new methods of instruction and assessment.

Professional development for teachers must be carefully integrated into each stage of a school's plan to implement high learning standards with culturally diverse student populations. To build an effective professional development program, schools must allot adequate time and resources for ongoing and sustained professional development activities, perhaps utilizing both outside experts and peer training and support. Schools must also determine what teachers generally need to know and be able to do to implement standards-based instruction and assessment and what teachers' specific needs for professional development are. Current research that is being conducted by the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University is revealing that implementing standards in schools with culturally diverse student populations calls upon teachers to make significant investments of time as they learn what standards mean for classroom practice.

> They need to examine and discuss their own beliefs and attitudes about teaching, student learning, and assessment. They need to develop a shared vision of what students should know and be able to do in a particular subject area at a particular grade level and how teachers can share responsibility for ensuring that students meet these standards. For teachers to engage in each of these processes takes more time than might be anticipated. (Clair, Adger, Short, & Millen, 1998)

Estrin (1993) and Farr and Trumbull (1997) have emphasized the need to provide opportunities for teachers to learn more about issues of language and culture and how they play out in the classroom, and to develop deep knowledge about particular cultural communities. They cite the need for professional development in the following areas:

- Understanding differences in the communication and cognitive styles of students from different cultures
- Evaluating the language demands of classroom tasks
- Including all students in classroom discussion
- Developing learning tasks that connect to students' cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge
- Using multiple forms of assessment
- Creating and applying rubrics that are not culturally biased
- Understanding how teachers' own language and culture shape understanding of student performance

To help schools and districts strengthen teacher knowledge in these areas, Appendix 1 contains a *Teacher Self-Assessment Survey* and a *Professional Development Planning Profile* that can be used as tools for planning and developing ongoing professional development programs.

Translating the mission of "high standards for all" into reality requires policies and practices that provide clear direction and guidance for instruction and assessment. School policies communicate the school's beliefs about the quality of education that should be offered to all students; they also send strong messages about the school's commitment to ensuring fairness and equity in instructional practice. High expectations should be set for all students, and all students should have high quality instruction and access to the resources necessary for learning. Assessment measures should be unbiased and their results used appropriately. Policies and practices that are key to supporting standards-based instruction and assessment in culturally diverse schools are shown in Figure 2. A tool for assessing a school's status against these desired policies and practices can be found in Appendix 2.

Figure 2

Policies and Practices That Support the Implementation of High Learning Standards in Culturally Diverse Schools

- The curriculum for *all* students is based on the same standards for what students should know and be able to do.
- Teachers hold high expectations for all students.
- The school provides all students with high quality learning resources and instruction.
- The school provides all students with opportunities to develop higher order proficiencies.
- The school makes sufficient time and resources available for ongoing professional development that focuses on teacher implementation of standards.
- Teachers draw upon the home and community experiences of culturally diverse students.
- Teachers integrate assessment with instruction.
- Teachers use appropriate accommodations to enhance the learning of English language learners.
- Teachers use multiple assessment measures that offer a variety of ways for students to demonstrate what they know and can do.
- Teachers use classroom assessments and scoring rubrics that are free of cultural bias and do not penalize students with varying levels of English proficiency.
- School staff use clearly defined criteria to determine the appropriateness of assessments for students with varying levels of English proficiency.
- School staff ensure the appropriate interpretation and use of student assessment results.
- School staff use assessment results to improve instruction and student learning.

Standards-Based Learning for English Language Learners

The use of education standards has great potential for improving the quality of education offered to the rapidly growing population of students in America's schools whose first language is not English. Known as English language learners, this population includes both students who are just beginning to learn English and those who have already developed considerable proficiency.[1] This population of students is highly diverse, and descriptions of this group, as of any group of people, tend to rely on generalization. While these students share one important variable — the need to build proficiency in English—they differ from each other in many other respects, such as their language and cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic status, family histories, length of time in the U.S., mobility, prior school experiences, and educational orientations. As a group, English language learners represent more diversity than any other group of students in our schools.

The Benefits of Standards for English Language Learners

Organizing learning around clearly defined content and performance standards encourages open dialogue about a school's expectations for English language learners and about the quality of education it offers them. Standards-based learning can benefit these students by raising expectations for their achievement, encouraging the use of learning tasks connected to their real life experiences, and improving teacher practices.

Raising Expectations for Student Achievement. Standards reform, which focuses on making the knowledge and skills essential to success in today's society accessible to all students, may provide the leverage necessary to overcome the low expectations set for many students who are not yet proficient in English. Research and practice have demonstrated repeatedly that high expectations are essential to student success in school. Students do better when they know what is expected of them and when those expectations are high. Schools pay attention when policymakers endorse high standards for student learning as the foundation for school accountability. This influence on the content and quality of school curricula may motivate schools to align the instruction they provide to English language learners with high expectations for achievement.

[1] The term "English language learner" (ELL) is a recent designation for students whose first language is not English. It reflects a positive focus on what these students are accomplishing — mastering another language – and is preferred by some researchers in contrast to the term "limited English proficient" (LEP) which is the designation used in federal and state education legislation and most national and state data collection efforts (August & Hakuta, 1997; LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994).

The standards movement also has prompted states to develop appropriate assessments to evaluate whether students have attained high learning standards and focused attention on the need to ensure the participation of *all* students in national, state, and local assessments of student progress. The movement to standards is thus requiring "consideration of how assessments, both those currently in use and those which states and school districts are developing, will enable all students, including limited English proficient students, to demonstrate what they know and can do" (Rivera & Vincent, 1996).

Emphasizing Authentic Learning Tasks. It is far more likely that English language learners will succeed in school if learning tasks connect to their cultural frames of reference and their personal experiences. Therefore, the standards movement's emphasis on authentic learning tasks may benefit these students by allowing them to apply essential knowledge to contexts that are meaningful. Not only are students' experiences seen as relevant, but they are viewed as an essential part of the learning process. This emphasis on context is even more important for the English learner who has to demonstrate his or her content knowledge in an emerging second language (Hafner & Ulanoff, 1994). The more that instructional processes draw upon the real-life experiences of English language learners, allow them to build upon their prior knowledge, and allow for diverse ways of solving problems, the easier it will be for them to demonstrate what they know and can do (Farr & Trumbull, 1997; Koelsch, Estrin, & Farr, 1995; Neill, 1995). This doesn't mean that learning should be limited to the experiences that students bring to school, but rather that these experiences serve as starting points for making knowledge meaningful. In designing learning tasks for English language learners, the student's home culture can be an asset in the learning process, and home and community experiences can be integrated into instruction (Baker & O'Neil, 1995; Garcia & Pearson, 1994; Winfield, 1995). The challenge is making effective instructional use of the personal and cultural knowledge of students, while at the same time helping them reach beyond their cultural boundaries (Banks & Banks, 1993).

Improving Teaching Practices. Organizing learning around high standards for all students will improve the instruction that English language learners receive by encouraging teachers to broaden the focus of their teaching to include higher order thinking and problem-solving processes in classroom activities for these students. Emerging strategies for assessing student learning through portfolios, exhibitions, projects, and careful observations of children aim to strengthen teaching and learning "by involving students in more meaningful, integrative, and challenging work, and by helping teachers to look carefully at student performance to understand how students are learning and thinking" (Darling-Hammond, 1994). Because these strategies develop teachers' capacities to look closely at student work and reflect upon students' strengths and needs, they may have a positive impact on the quality of teaching provided to English language learners.

Concerns about Education Standards and English Language Learners

Concerns have been raised that insufficient attention has been given to *how* students with varying levels of English proficiency will be included in the implementation of standards at the classroom level. To apply standards equitably to diverse student populations, attention must be given to ensuring that all students are adequately prepared in the proficiencies represented in the standards. In addition, cultural bias may influence the development of authentic learning tasks at the classroom level, and the considerable language demands of higher order learning tasks may put students who are learning English at a disadvantage.

Inclusion in the Implementation of Learning Standards. Advocates for students with limited-English proficiency have stressed that the standards-setting process has given too little attention to *how* diverse student populations will meet the standards and that more attention must be given to the "nuts and bolts" of implementing standards and the accommodations that will be necessary for some children (Viadero and West, 1993). Concerns focus on how all students can be included without dooming certain students to failure and how differences can be accommodated without sacrificing academic rigor. Some also express concern that standards-based reform efforts have not adequately addressed the varied needs of English language learners, nor the implications of emerging assessments for these students. "The implicit guiding assumption appears to be that whatever curricular revisions and/or assessment innovations contribute to the success of monolingual students will also work for ELLs—that once ELLs know a little English, the new and improved assessments will fit them too" (LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994, p. 56). Researchers and advocates caution that the notion of "one size fits all" won't work, and that even the most promising approaches to instruction and assessment cannot be offered uniformly to all populations. While having students perform the same task under the same conditions may seem like equity, school administrators and teachers must recognize that more meaningful equity would allow all students to put their "best foot forward" and offer diverse ways of solving problems and accomplishing tasks (Garcia & Pearson, 1994).

Access to Challenging Instruction. Unless English language learners receive challenging instruction, it is unlikely that they will achieve at high levels or be fairly assessed by programs designed to measure high level learning. In the past, "the traditional uses of tests for program placement have failed to ensure that these students receive the best education possible. Future policies must create greater access to rich and varied educational opportunities or a large majority of them will continue to perform at low levels" (Lachat, 1999). LaCelle-Peterson and Rivera (1994) emphasize that for English language learners to achieve educational excellence and equity, they must have access to the full range of

content knowledge that is valued by the school, community, and society, and they must be exposed to challenging subject matter. They must be given instruction that adequately prepares them in the content being assessed and enables them to perform complex and cognitively demanding learning tasks.

Cultural Bias. The lack of consideration that has been given to the implications of reform for English language learners has raised concerns about whether the greater reliance on situational contexts in higher order learning tasks may actually increase cultural bias. If authentic learning tasks present students with "real world" situations, we must ask which students' realities are reflected in these tasks. In developing authentic learning tasks for English language learners, the diversity of cultures represented in the student population must be considered, and direct attention must be given to determining the requisite mainstream cultural knowledge necessary for understanding and responding to the learning task. Consideration must be given to whether the topics of learning tasks are relevant to diverse cultures and whether learning activities enable students from different cultures to bridge the differences between their own backgrounds and the academic knowledge valued in schools. Garcia and Pearson (1994) point out that experts in multicultural education have shown how difficult it is for mainstream educators to identify topics that are culturally relevant to minority students, and that even the involvement of minority educators in selecting and developing topics, tasks, and rubrics cannot guarantee representation and relevance. Thus, teachers implementing standards at the classroom level face a complex challenge in developing authentic learning tasks that involve higher order learning skills and are also meaningful to students from a variety of cultures (Winfield, 1995).

The Language Demands of Higher Order Learning Tasks. The language demands of higher order learning tasks may prove particularly problematic for English language learners since more reading and writing is required in solving problems and expressing ideas that reflect critical thinking skllls. Even in mathematics and science, students are expected to write explanations of their solutions and how they went about solving problems (Farr & Trumbull, 1997). Language will always be a central factor in determining the appropriateness of higher order learning tasks for English language learners. Thus, the process of implementing learning standards with these students must address the impact of language skills on their ability to successfully accomplish learning tasks (Lachat, 1999). Unless the language demands of higher order learning tasks are clearly determined, it will be difficult to interpret the subject matter performance of English language learners because of the potential confounding of literacy skills with content knowledge (Koelsch et al., 1995; Navarrette & Gustke, 1996).

In developing scoring criteria for English language learners, the role of language must be considered to ensure that these students are not penalized for their lack of English language skills. Scoring rubrics used to assess students' performance on learning tasks should focus on the subject area knowledge, skills, and abilities being assessed, not on the quality of the language in which the response is expressed (LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994).

The TESOL ESL Standards: A Bridge to Subject Area Standards

The ESL Standards developed by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) were designed to be used by teachers and other educators who want to incorporate the standards into their educational program for students who are in the process of acquiring English as an additional language. The ESL Standards describe the language skills necessary for social and academic purposes, specifying the language competencies English language learners need "to become fully proficient in English, to have unrestricted access to grade-appropriate instruction in challenging academic subjects, and ultimately to lead rich and productive lives." They are intended to "provide the bridge to general education standards expected of all students in the United States" by helping teachers understand the unique instructional and assessment considerations that must be given to English language learners if they are to benefit from and achieve the high standards of learning that are being proposed for various subject areas (TESOL, 1997).

As shown on the next page, the ESL Standards are organized around three broad goals for English language learners at all age levels, with three distinct standards described for each goal. For each standard, the ESL Standards document provides the following elements:

Descriptors – Broad, representative behaviors that students exhibit when they meet a standard

Sample Progress Indicators – Assessable, observable activities for students to perform to show progress in meeting the standard

Vignettes – Instructional sequences, drawn from the real-life experiences of teachers, that demonstrate the standards in action and describe student and teacher activities that promote English language learning

Developed through a nationwide effort that included writing teams from TESOL affiliates all over the country as well as key advisors and reviewers, the ESL Standards represent a significant contribution to curriculum reform efforts aimed at promoting high levels of learning for English language learners. These standards articulate the English language development needs of English language learners, provide direction on how to meet the needs of these students, and highlight the central role of language in the attainment of other standards.

Figure 3

ESL Goals and Standards

Goal 1: To use English to communicate in social settings

Standard for Goal 1

Students will

- Use English to participate in social interaction
- Interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment
- Use learning strategies to extend their communicative competence

Goal 2: To use English to achieve academically in all content areas

Standard for Goal 2

Students will

- Use English to interact in the classroom
- Use English to obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form
- Use appropriate learning strategies to construct and apply academic knowledge

Goal 3: To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways

Standard for Goal 3

Students will

- Use the appropriate language variety, register, and genre according to audience, purpose, and setting
- Use nonverbal communication appropriate to audience, purpose and setting
- Use appropriate learning strategies to extend their sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence

(TESOL, 1997)

Using Performance Assessments to Measure English Language Learners' Progress on Standards

Performance-based assessment is widely viewed as offering a means to measure student progress on learning standards and as being more responsive to diversity than traditional assessments. Performance assessments

- Measure student achievement against a continuum of agreed upon standards of proficiency
- Emphasize the importance of *context through* real-life tasks that are "authentic" to the learner
- Focus on higher order thinking processes and how students integrate information and skills in performing tasks
- Require students to display what they know and are able to do by solving problems (performance tasks) of varying complexity, some of which involve multiple steps, several types of performance, and significant student time
- Often involve group as well as individual performance on a task

(Baker, O'Neil, & Linn 1993; Valdez-Pierce & O'Malley, 1992)

Advantages of Performance Assessments for English Language Learners

The use of performance assessments with English language learners is viewed with optimism because of the inherent flexibility in performance assessment and the use of multiple measures over time.

Flexibility in Assessment. Performance assessments allow teachers to use varied methods to assess student progress. A range of activities can be included in performance tasks that provide teachers with a richer, more complete picture of what English language learners have learned in various content areas (Farr & Trumbull, 1997). Also, by offering students opportunities to work alone, in pairs, or in groups, teachers can vary the assessment process to reflect student preferences and can examine how this affects student performance (Garcia & Pearson, 1994). This approach is widely supported in the literature. Wiggins (1989) highlighted the need for flexibility in assessment, emphasizing that assessments should accommodate students' learning styles, aptitudes, and interests. Gordon (1992) also called for diversity in the content and demands of tasks, flexibility in the time span of performance, and choice involving self-selected and teacher-selected items. When allowed to complete assessment tasks at their own pace, English language learners experiment, draft, reflect, and revise their work (LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994; Navarette &

Gustke, 1996). Farr and Trumbull (1997) highlighted that if the goal is to assess what students know and are able to do and to ensure that students' linguistic and cultural differences won't invalidate the assessment process, giving choice to the student or selecting an approach that better accommodates that student's learning style will lend greater validity.

The Use of Multiple Measures Over Time. Because performance assessments involve the use of multiple measures over time, they offer a wider range of opportunities for English language learners to show what they know and can do in both language and content areas (Estrin & Nelson-Barber, 1995; Navarrete & Gustke, 1996). The use of multiple assessments at different points in time is particularly critical for students whose primary language is not English. Decisions about their abilities, proficiencies, and progress should never be based on the results of a single test. They must be afforded the opportunity to demonstrate their progress in language and academic areas multiple times and through a number of different assessment measures. They must be given opportunities to show *how* they learn, and to demonstrate *what* they have learned in ways that are comfortable for them and reflect their communication capabilities.

By offering students varied ways to show their understanding and competence in a specific area of proficiency, the use of multiple assessment measures may lead to more valid judgements about the progress of students who are not yet proficient in English (Navarrete & Gustke, 1996). The work of Kornhaber and Gardner (1993) underscores the importance of looking at the multiple ways students learn and illustrates how student strengths and talents not shown by standardized tests can be revealed by providing students with a variety of classroom opportunities to demonstrate their competence. Therefore, providing English language learners with multiple ways of demonstrating what they know and can do can reveal productive "entry points" that build on their strengths and extend them into new areas of learning.

Offering multiple options for English language learners to demonstrate their competence also will encourage them to draw on a wider range of thinking skills and allow for a deeper understanding of their approaches to learning situations and knowledge of content. Teachers can observe thinking and organizational skills over time and develop a more valid profile of what students have learned. When multiple measures are used, teachers can differentiate between student difficulties caused by lack of English skills and those caused by lack of knowledge or expertise, and they can acquire more valid information about the emerging knowledge and development of students (Farr & Trumbull, 1997).

Determining the Appropriateness of Performance Assessments for English Language Learners

It is important for both content teachers and teachers who are especially knowledgeable about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students to work together in reviewing the appropriateness and fairness of performance assessments for students with varying levels of English proficiency. Research indicates that the following questions should be used as guidelines in determining the appropriateness of performance tasks for English language learners:

- What is the extent of English language learners' experiences with the concepts, knowledge, skills, and applications represented in the learning tasks?
- What are the language demands of tasks, particularly those that emphasize higher-order thinking skills?
- Do learning tasks include concepts, vocabulary, and activities that would not be familiar to students from a particular culture?
- What prior knowledge and understanding do English language learners need in order to make sense of learning tasks?
- Will English language learners be able to connect their cultural backgrounds and experiences to what is expected in the learning task?
- What types of accommodations are needed for English language learners to have the same opportunities as other students to demonstrate what they know and can do?

(Baker & O'Neil, 1995; Estrin & Nelson-Barber, 1995; Farr & Trumbull, 1997; Garcia & Pearson, 1994; LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994; Neill, 1995)

Appendix 3 includes a more comprehensive set of questions that can be used by teachers as guidelines for determining the appropriateness of performance assessments for English language learners. These questions address the relevant prior knowledge necessary to complete a performance task, language demands and cultural bias, and procedural bias and scoring criteria. By using these guidelines, teachers can work together to develop common understandings of how student's cultural backgrounds and communication styles may affect how they engage in learning tasks and whether performance assessments are free of bias.

Achieving the Vision of High Standards for All

Because "high standards for all students" is such a new vision, American education must focus attention on the kinds of issues dealt with in this publication to achieve the commitment of academic success for all. The standards movement challenges us to clarify what students should know and be able to do and to no longer accept low expectations for so many students. By connecting student learning in school with our expectations for how students will have to perform in adult life, the standards movement has shifted instruction toward approaches that develop students' reasoning and problem solving skills. By promoting the integration of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, this movement has led to more flexibility in the methods used to measure what students actually know and are able to do.

This new vision of teaching and learning requires educators and the public to understand that high standards are as important in education as they are in the medical profession, in licensing pilots, or in international sports competition such as the Olympics. They define what is essential for successful performance and encourage people to strive for the best. From an equity perspective, by setting high standards for all students, we show that we believe that the quality of education offered to "the best and the brightest" should be the quality of education available to all. "Watered down" curricula, which deny some students adequate preparation for success in an increasingly demanding world, are unacceptable. As a result, "opportunity to learn" has come to mean that the best curricular offerings and instructional methods should be available to all students.

Standards also cause a new focus on the quality of learning environments, the range of resources, and the level of professional development necessary to support high student achievement for learners who come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Schools are expected to offer the same standards-based curriculum to all students and to provide access to the types of instructional practices that promote high levels of learning. However, varied and innovative instructional strategies will be essential to enable students with diverse needs and varying levels of English proficiency to learn at high levels. To effect these strategies, American education will need highly skilled teachers who can offer a range of learning opportunities that connect to different learning styles—some of which may be culturally-based—and also provide the necessary accommodations and supports that enhance student learning.

Finally, the standards movement urges educators and the public to realize that instead of comparing students to each other, we should think of student progress in relation to the standards themselves. As the results from new standards-based assessments are released, communities will need to recognize that these assessments represent some areas of knowledge and skills that may not have been taught directly to the general student population of most schools, nor, in particular, to English language learners. Initial test scores will provide important benchmarks for examining the extent to which various segments of our student populations have or have not been exposed to learning that is essential in today's world. These early results are thus an important foundation for identifying where current curriculum and practice does not promote high standards of learning for all students and where curriculum improvement and staff development are clearly necessary if equity in learning is to be achieved.

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Appendices

Tools for Implementing Standards-Based Learning in Culturally Diverse Schools

The appendices include the following tools to assist school administrators and teachers in implementing policies and practices, and professional development programs that support and enhance standards-based learning in culturally diverse schools.

Appendix 1

Professional Development That Supports Standards-Based Learning in Culturally Diverse Schools

Appendix 2

Assessment Policies and Practices That Support Standards-Based Learning in Culturally Diverse Schools

Appendix 3

Guidelines for Determining the Appropriateness of Performance Assessments for Students from Diverse Linguistic and Cultural Backgrounds

APPENDIX 1

Professional Development that Supports Standards-Based Learning in Culturally Diverse Schools

Listed below are some of the teacher proficiencies (what teachers must know and be able to do) that are essential to effectively implementing standards-based instruction and assessment with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. These areas of proficiency can be the basis for developing an ongoing professional development program for teachers. They are followed by examples of a *Teacher-Self Assessment Survey* and a *Professional Development Planning Profile* that can be used as tools for planning and developing a professional development program.

- Organizing instruction and assessment around a standards-based curriculum for students with varying levels of English proficiency
- Developing authentic performance tasks that connect to students' cultural backgrounds, interests, and prior knowledge
- Understanding how language and culture influence student learning
- Understanding differences in the communication and cognitive styles of various cultures and what these mean for student participation in learning tasks
- Providing a variety of opportunities for students with varying levels of English proficiency to explore concepts and problem situations over time
- Accommodating different learning styles in performance assessments
- Using multiple forms of assessment to gather evidence of student proficiencies
- Creating and applying rubrics that are not culturally biased
- Using portfolio assessment with culturally diverse student populations
- Ways of evaluating the language demands and cultural content of learning tasks
- Strategies for including all students in classroom discourse
- Ways of working with different cultural communities

The ***Teacher Self-Assessment Survey*** is a tool that allows teachers to indicate their professional development needs and interests. Teachers use a 4-point scale to rate the importance of their participating in professional development opportunities for each particular area, with 1 being low and 4 being high. They are also asked to indicate areas where they feel they could serve as a resource in assisting other teachers in the school to develop deeper understandings and skills. The results of the *Teacher Self-Assessment Survey* can be used as a basis for developing a proficiency-based professional development program for teachers around specific areas.

Teacher Self-Assessment
Professional Development Needs and Interests

Listed below are several possible areas of professional development that are connected to performance-based instruction and assessment for culturally diverse student populations. For each area, please use the 4-point scale to rate your need for professional development in that area, with 4 being high and 1 being low. Also, please indicate areas where you feel you could serve as a resource in assisting other teachers in the school to develop deeper understandings and skills.

	Professional Development Needs Please circle number from 1 – 4				
	Low Need			High Need	I could help other teachers in this area (✓)
1. Organizing instruction and assessment around a standards-based curriculum for students with varying levels of English proficiency	1	2	3	4	❑
2. Developing authentic performance tasks that connect to students' cultural backgrounds, interests, and prior knowledge	1	2	3	4	❑
3. Understanding how language and culture influence student learning	1	2	3	4	❑
4. Understanding differences in the communication and cognitive styles of various cultures and what these mean for student participation in learning tasks	1	2	3	4	❑
5. Providing a variety of opportunities for students with varying levels of English proficiency to explore concepts and problem situations over time	1	2	3	4	❑
6. Accommodating different learning styles in performance assessments	1	2	3	4	❑
7. Using multiple forms of assessment to gather evidence of student proficiencies	1	2	3	4	❑
8. Creating and applying rubrics that are not culturally biased	1	2	3	4	❑
9. Using portfolio assessment with culturally diverse student populations	1	2	3	4	❑
10. Ways of evaluating the language demands and cultural content of learning tasks	1	2	3	4	❑
11. Strategies for including all students in classroom discourse	1	2	3	4	❑
12. Ways of working with different cultural communities	1	2	3	4	❑

The ***Professional Development Planning Profile*** is a tool for summarizing the results of the *Teacher Self-Assessment Survey* and for engaging a school team in collaboratively developing a plan for professional development and defining criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the professional development opportunities provided. The planning process itself affords teachers and administrators an important opportunity to communicate about the various areas of proficiency and how best to engage teachers in the school in an ongoing process of development.

Professional Development Planning Profile

Area of Teacher Proficiency	Summary of Teacher Ratings of Need/Interest (1 = low – 4 = high) Indicate number of teachers that checked each rating.				Number of Teachers Available to Assist Others In Each Area
	1	2	3	4	
1. Organizing instruction and assessment around a standards-based curriculum for students with varying levels of English proficiency	___	___	___	___	___
2. Developing authentic performance tasks that connect to students' cultural backgrounds, interests, and prior knowledge	___	___	___	___	___
3. Understanding how language and culture influence student learning	___	___	___	___	___
4. Understanding differences in the communication and cognitive styles of various cultures and what these mean for student participation in learning tasks	___	___	___	___	___
5. Providing a variety of opportunities for students with varying levels of English proficiency to explore concepts and problem situations over time	___	___	___	___	___
6. Accommodating different learning styles in performance assessments	___	___	___	___	___
7. Using multiple forms of assessment to gather evidence of student proficiencies	___	___	___	___	___
8. Creating and applying rubrics that are not culturally biased	___	___	___	___	___
9. Using portfolio assessment with culturally diverse student populations	___	___	___	___	___
10. Ways of evaluating the language demands and cultural content of learning tasks	___	___	___	___	___
11. Strategies for including all students in classroom discourse	___	___	___	___	___
12. Ways of working with different cultural communities	___	___	___	___	___

Examp

Professional D
Planning

Area of Proficiency

Developing authentic performance tasks that connect to students' cultural ba

Plan for Addressing Proficiency Area

Describe the combination of professional development activities that will be used to develop teacher proficiency in this area. These might include the use of an outside consultant for training, classroom demonstration, and facilitation, as well as peer training and demonstration.

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ckgrounds, interests, and prior knowledge.

Plan for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Professional Development
What quality and performance criteria should be used to assess the effectiveness of professional development activities for increasing teacher proficiency?

Examp

Professional D
Planning

Area of Proficiency

Using multiple forms of assessment to gather evidence of student proficiencie

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APPENDIX 2

Assessment Policies and Practices That Support Standards-Based Learning in Culturally Diverse Schools

Listed below are school policies and practices that support and enhance standards-based instruction and assessment in culturally and linguistically diverse schools and classrooms.

- The curriculum offered to *all* students is based on the same standards for what students should know and be able to do.
- There are high expectations for all students.
- All students are provided with high quality learning resources and instruction.
- All students have opportunities to develop higher order proficiencies.
- Sufficient time and resources are made available for ongoing professional development that focuses on teacher implementation of standards.
- Teachers are encouraged to draw upon the home and community experiences of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Assessment is integrated with instruction and focuses on what students know and can do.
- Guidelines are defined and implemented for using accommodations to enhance the learning of English language learners.
- Multiple assessment measures are used that offer a variety of ways for students to demonstrate what they know and can do.
- Classroom assessments and scoring rubrics are free of cultural bias and do not penalize students with varying levels of English proficiency.
- Clearly defined criteria are used to determine the appropriateness of assessments for students with varying levels of proficiency.
- Guidelines are defined and implemented that ensure the appropriate interpretation and use of student assessment results.
- Assessment results are used by school staff to improve instruction and student learning.

Assessment of Policies and Practices That Support Standards-Based Learning In Culturally Diverse Schools

Use this form to assess the status of these policies and practices *in your school* — whether they are 1) in place, 2) need improvement, 3) in development, or 4) need to be developed.

	Policy/Practice			
	In Place	Needs Improvement	In Development	Needs to Be Developed
a. The curriculum offered to *all* students is based on the same standards for what students should know and be able to do.	____	____	____	____
b. There are high expectations for all students.	____	____	____	____
c. All students are provided with high quality learning resources and instruction.	____	____	____	____
d. All students have opportunities to develop higher order proficiencies.	____	____	____	____
e. Sufficient time and resources are made available for ongoing professional development that focuses on teacher implementation of standards.	____	____	____	____
f. Teachers are encouraged to draw upon the home and community experiences of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	____	____	____	____
g. Assessment is integrated with instruction and focuses on what students know and can do.	____	____	____	____
h. Guidelines are defined and implemented for using accommodations to enhance the learning of English language learners.	____	____	____	____
i. Multiple assessment measures are used that offer a variety of ways for students to demonstrate what they know and can do.	____	____	____	____
j. Classroom assessments and scoring rubrics are free of cultural bias and do not penalize students with varying levels of English proficiency.	____	____	____	____
k. Clearly defined criteria are used to determine the appropriateness of assessments for students with varying levels of proficiency.	____	____	____	____
l. Guidelines are defined and implemented that ensure the appropriate interpretation and use of student assessment results.	____	____	____	____
m. Assessment results are used by school staff to improve instruction and student learning.	____	____	____	____

Appendix 3

Guidelines for Determining the Appropriateness of Performance Assessment for Students from Diverse Linguistic and Cultural Backgrounds

It is important for both content teachers and teachers who are knowledgeable about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students to work together in reviewing the appropriateness and fairness of performance assessments for culturally and linguistically diverse students. The questions below can be used as guidelines for conducting such a review.

Relevant Prior Knowledge

- What common experiences and understandings are required of students to make sense of the assessment task and productively undertake its solution?
- Will students be able connect their cultural background and their experiences to what is expected in the assessment task?
- What is the extent of students' prior experiences with the concepts, knowledge, skills, and applications represented in the assessment?
- Is there reason to believe that students from different cultural groups may not be motivated by the topics covered in the task?
- Are the criteria for judging student performance known and familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds — do all students understand the processes and products of learning that are valued in the assessment task?

Language Demands and Cultural Bias

- Has consideration been given to the language demands of the learning task for students from diverse language backgrounds, particularly for tasks emphasizing higher order thinking skills?
- If the focus of the task is not language facility, are there alternative ways for students with limited English proficiency to display their understanding?
- Does the assessment task include concepts, vocabulary, and activities that would not be familiar to students from a particular culture?
- Are the limited number of topics used in the performance assessment relevant to a broad diversity of students?
- Are assessment tasks multidimensional in ways that allow students from diverse cultural backgrounds to demonstrate their understanding?

- What accommodations would be necessary to give students with limited English proficiency the same opportunity available to monolingual students to demonstrate what they know and can do?

Procedural Bias and Scoring Criteria

- Do the assessment tasks unduly penalize students for whom the types of activities necessary in completing the task may be unfamiliar?
- Do the time limits deprive students with limited English language proficiency of the amount of time they need to complete an assessment task?
- Do the criteria used to judge student performance favor particular cultural orientations?
- What is the role of language in the scoring criteria? Specifically, do the scoring criteria for content area assessments focus on the knowledge, skills, and abilities being tested, and not on the quality of the language in which the response is expressed? Would students be placed at a disadvantage if they lacked English language skills?
- Do the teachers who will assess student performance include staff who are sufficiently familiar with students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds to make appropriate interpretations of student performances? Are the raters who score students' work trained to recognize and score the performance of students from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds? Do raters include educators from the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds as the students?

(Baker & O'Neil, 1995; Farr & Trumbull, 1997; Estrin & Nelson-Barber, 1995; Garcia & Pearson, 1994; LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994; Neill, 1995; Rivera & Vincent, 1996)

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for Students from Diverse Lingu

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- Will students be able to connect their cultural background and their experiences to what is expected in the assessment task?
- What is the extent of students' prior experiences with the concepts, knowledge, skills, and applications represented in the assessment?
- Is there reason to believe that students from different cultural groups may not be motivated by the topics covered in the task?
- Are the criteria for judging student performance known and familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds — do all students understand the processes and products of learning that are valued in the assessment task?

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Comments of Review Team Members on Fairness of Performance Assessments in Terms of Relevant Prior Knowledge

Language Demands and Cultural Bias

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Comments of Review Team Members on Fairness of Performance Assessments in Terms of Relevant Prior Knowledge

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